

CLAIMS

1. A footrest apparatus comprising:

a pair of left and right supporting members (3) (3) frontwardly projecting from a front portion of a chair (2);

a footrest (7) supported between the supporting members (3), (3) so as to be rotatable about a lateral axis (4) and provided with a lower limb massaging portion (5) on one surface thereof and a lower limb resting surface (6) on the other surface thereof on which lower limbs (64) can be rested; and

a position switching mechanism (8) provided between the supporting member (3) and the footrest (7) for changing the position of the footrest (7) between a massaging position in which the lower limb massaging portion (5) is oriented frontward, and a resting position in which the lower limb resting surface (6) is oriented frontward.

2. A footrest apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the position switching mechanism (8) comprises a disk-shaped rotary engagement member (13) having an engagement portion (12A) for positionally fixing the footrest (7) in the massaging position and an engagement portion (12B) for positionally fixing the same in the resting position on a peripheral edge (11) thereof, the disk-shaped rotary engagement member (13) being provided coaxially with the lateral axis (4), an engaging member (14) moving toward and apart from the rotary engagement member (13)

in a radial direction thereof and detachably engaging the respective engagement portions (12A), (12B) selectively by moving toward the same for restraining rotation of the rotary engagement member (13), a releasing device (15) for moving the engaging member (14) in the direction apart from the rotary engagement member for releasing the engagement, a released-state retaining device (16) for retaining the released state by the releasing device (15), and an engagement restoring device (17) for engaging the engaging member (14) with the rotary engagement member (13) by bringing the released-state retaining device (16) into non-retaining state.

3. A footrest apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein the releasing device (15) includes a releasing member (55) for moving the engaging member (14) apart from the rotary engagement member (13).

4. A footrest apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the releasing member (55) is provided on the outer surface of the supporting member (3).

5. A footrest apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the released-state retaining device (16) includes a lock portion (23) provided on the engaging member (14) and a released-state retaining member (25) having an engagement portion (24) which

can engage the lock portion (23) in a state in which the engaging member (14) is moved apart.

6. A footrest apparatus according to Claim 5, wherein the engagement restoring device (17) includes a restoring strip (26) having a proximal end swingably supported at a position in the vicinity of the respective engagement portions (12A) (12B) of the rotary engagement member (13), and a distal end being capable of projecting and retracting from the peripheral edge (11), so that the distal end is retracted from the peripheral edge (11) when the rotary engagement member (13) rotates in one direction; and wherein the rotary engagement member (13) includes a restraining portion (27) for restraining swinging movement of the restoring strip (26) to allow the distal end of the restoring strip (26) to project from the peripheral edge (11) to press the released-state retaining member (25) in a retaining-state canceling direction when the rotary engagement member (13) rotates in the other direction.

7. A footrest apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein the released-state retaining member (25) is disposed in the vicinity of the engaging member (14) along the direction of the movement thereof toward and apart from the rotary engagement member.

8. A footrest apparatus according to any one of Claims 1

to 7, wherein the pair of supporting members (3) (3) are supported so as to be capable of swinging about a supporting shaft (32) at a front portion of the chair (2) so that the vertical position of the footrest (7) can be changed; wherein a retaining device (29) for retaining the vertical position is provided; and wherein an operating member (30) for releasing the retained state of the retaining device (29) is provided on one of left and right outer surfaces of the chair.